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ART FOR ART'S SAKE: A QUERY.

To the Editors of *Mod. Lang. Notes*.

SIRS:—When did the phrase “art for art’s sake” first appear in English criticism? The earliest *locus* which I have been able to find is in a letter of Thackeray’s, written in 1839, and published by his daughter, Mrs. Ritchie, in her *Chapters from some Memoirs*, 1895, chapter ix: “Please God we shall begin, ere long, to love art for art’s sake. It is Carlyle who has worked more than any other to give it its independence.” French scholars have recently investigated the history of *l’art pour l’art*, the French prototype of the English phrase; and Thackeray’s use of it seems to anticipate by a half dozen years its first appearance in print in France, though Victor Cousin is said to have used it in a series of lectures in 1818, and Victor Hugo claimed the phrase for himself as an incidental coinage of conversation in 1829 or 1830 (cf. Stapfer, *Questions Esthétiques et Religieuses*, 1906, pp. 26–27, and Cassagne, *La Théorie de l’Art pour l’Art en France*, 1906, p. 38 sq.). The origin of the phrase in England is yet to be traced.

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THE *Phoenix* AND THE *Guthlac*.

To the Editors of *Mod. Lang. Notes*.

SIRS:—I offer for what they may be worth the following recently noted parallels between these two poems. If they convince any one that the passages are interdependent, he would probably make the further inference that the author of the *Phoenix* had before him the more detailed and expanded statement in the *Guthlac*.

Phoenix 393–419.

Habbað we geascad, ðæt se
ælmihrtiga
worhte wer and wif ðurh his
wundra sped,
and hi ða gesette on ðone
selestan

Guthlac 791–842.

Ðæt is wide cuð wera
cneorissum,
folcum gefræge, ðætte
frymða god
ðone ærestan ælda cynnes
of ðære clænestan, cyning

foldan sceattan

ðone fira bearn
nemnað neornawong, ðær
him nænges wæs
eades onsyn,

ðenden eces word,
halges hleoðorcwide healdan
woldan
on ðam niwan gefean.

Ðær him nið gescod,
ealdfeondes æfest, se hine
æt gebead
beames blæde, ðæt hi bu
ðegun
æppel unrædum ofer est
godes,
bryddon forbodene.

Ðær him bitter wearð
yrmðu æfter æte and hyra
eafterum swa
sarlic symbol, sunum and
dohtrum:
Wurdon teonlice toðas idge
ageald æfter gylte; hæfdon
godes yrre
bittre bealosorge: ðæs ða byre
siððan
gyrne onguldon, ðe hi ðæt
gyfl ðegun . . .
ofer eces word.

(411–418, no parallel.)

ðurh feondes searo

ælmihrtig,
foldan worhte.

797: fæder wæs acenned
Adam ærest ðurh est godes
on neornawong, ðær him
nænges wæs
willan onsyn

814: gif hy halges word
healdan woldum

804: longe neotan
niura gefeama

842: ðæt him bam gescod.

818: ac his wif genom
wyrmes larum

blede forbodene and of beame
ahneop
wæstm biwiredne ofer word
godes

840: ðone bitran drync

825: eardwica cyst
beorht oðbroden and hyra
bearnum swa,
eafterum æfter

832: siððan sceoldon
mægð and mægas morðres
ongyltan
godscyldge gyryn.

820: ofer word godes

822: deaðberende gyfl

821: ðurh deofles searo

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ARCHAISMS IN BALLADS.

To the Editors of *Mod. Lang. Notes*.

SIRS:—A version of the ballad of *The Two Sisters*¹ taken down in Clinton County, Missouri, has in the fifth stanza

“As they was a-walking by the saucy brimside.”

Sea-brim and *seaside-brim* are found in the ver-

¹See *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, xix, p. 233.

sions recorded by Child, but not *saucey*. Neither is it in his glossary; nor, in any sense that will fit here, in the *Century Dictionary*. The *English Dialect Dictionary* records a Yorkshire meaning, "slippery . . ., said of the streets when covered with ice, but not when slippery with dirt." There is nothing in the ballad to suggest icy weather. A friend considers it a corruption of *salt sea*; but this, leaving aside the redundancy (which is, of course, no great objection in ballads), is inconsistent with the rhythm of the line. Remembering the derivation of *sauce* one is tempted to fancy in this ballad word an ancient meaning retained—a temptation, however, which the philologic conscience must resist.

Two versions of *Lord Thomas and Fair Annet*,² one from Miller County and one from Gentry County, have as their opening lines respectively

"Come mother, come mother, come riddle your *sword*,"

and

"Come mother, come mother, come riddle your *sport*."

The manifold perversions of the old formula for asking advice in the versions of this ballad printed by Child, some of them amusing, but none of them quite inexplicable, afford no suggestion for the interpretation of the Missouri form, and I had accepted it as altogether meaningless until a passage in Professor Gummere's *The Popular Ballad*³ suggested that it might be a relic of ancient popular belief in the soothsaying power of weapons. *Sport* in the second version would then be a mis-hearing of *sword*. But how should such an archaic variant escape the net of Professor Child and his collaborators, to reappear in Missouri in the twentieth century?

The fifth stanza of *A Woman and the Devil*⁴ (which is a version of *The Farmer's Curst Wife* known in Bollinger County), has this:

"Ten little devils come *all on a wire*,
She up with her foot and kicked nine in the fire."

² *Ibid.*, pp. 237, 249.

³ P. 304, where Gummere quotes from *Gil Brenton*:

"And speak up, my bonnie brown sword, that winna lie."

⁴ *Jour. of Amer. Folk-Lore*, xix, 299.

This corresponds to the 8th stanza of Child's version A,

"She spied thirteen imps all dancing in chains,
She up with her pattens and beat out their brains."

There is nothing corresponding to it in the other version given by Child. (The broadside of *The Devil and the Scold* in the *Roxburghe Ballads* I have not seen.) The little devils coming "all on a wire" look like a reminiscence of the miracle plays or of popular stage-craft derived therefrom. According to Chambers's *Mediaeval Stage*, II, 142, the stage directions of the Cornish *Creation of the World*, a partial cycle written by William Jordan in 1611, show that "Lucifer goes down to hell 'apareled fowle wth fyre about hem' and the plain [in which the play is acted] is filled with 'every degre of devylls of lether and *spirytyis on cordis*.'" This seems to present precisely the visual image of the Bollinger County version. Chambers adds that performances of a similar character were known in Shropshire and Wales down to the beginning of the nineteenth century.

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BRIEF MENTION.

Etude philologique sur le Nord de la France (Pas-de-Calais, Nord, Somme). Par L. BRÉBION. Paris and London, 1907. xxv + 255 pp., 8°.

Mr. Brébion gives under this title a study of the patois of a group of villages in Artois (Créquy, Fressin, Planques, Sains and Torcy), embracing a comparison with the French of the phonology, morphology, and word-formation. The author seems acquainted with the leading French studies in dialectology, but there are indications that he has not sufficiently assimilated the methods employed in them, nor does he give any clue to how he collected and controlled his material. His transcription of the sounds is a poor compromise between a phonetic system and French official orthography.